

**Sangamon Township
Informational Meeting Minutes**

Held at Sangamon Township Building, 1264 Old Rt 47 White Heath, Illinois

June 13, 2019

An informational meeting about the Sangamon Township Park Development Project was called to order at 6:07 pm by Supervisor Kathleen Piatt. Roll call was taken. Present were Supervisor Piatt, Trustee Mike Nolan, Trustee John Foley, Trustee Bill Olsen and Trustee Bill Blickhan.

Also present were Dale Latz, Loyd Wax, Aaron Brown, Mary Murphy, Tom Murphy, Thomas Scott, Jr., Tammy Benson, Kim Benson, Dana Rhoades, Michael Schroeder, and Clerk Kevin Duff.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Supervisor Piatt introduced the Board and Aaron Brown, chair of the White Heath Rec League.

Trustee Blickhan gave a summary of the Park Development Project. The project is critical to the Township to help solve some safety concerns of the present ball diamond. The project will provide off street parking and off street pedestrian circulation. The project will also provide additional space for warm up activities and a possible second ball diamond. When the neighboring property adjacent to the existing ball diamond came up for sale, the Township Board met in closed sessions to negotiate with the sellers; closed sessions were necessary to avoid jeopardizing the negotiations with the sellers. The sellers are Rick Pontious and Christina Pontious. Last May, the Board presented the project in their regular open session after the sellers gave the Township a proposition. The proposition is to sell the Township 11.11 acres at \$10,000/acre. The Township appreciates that the sellers are willing to sell part of their farm for this project.

Critical to the project is a funding plan to pay for the land. Supervisor Piatt worked with a local agency, The Robert Millikin Trust, who has agreed to give the Township 50% of the cost of the land. The Township's Park Fund (a dedicated fund that is levied and therefor must be spent on parks) has a surplus now that will cover most of the Township's cost.

The White Heath Rec League is committed to help develop the project by building another ball diamond as the league did for the original ball diamond. The Township would develop off street parking. Undesignated park use space may also be developed by the Township with help from the Piatt County Forest Preserve.

The Township talked with the City of Monticello's Park Superintendent about the project and their plans for recreation expansion. The City's Parks Superintendent was supportive of the Township's plans to develop another ball diamond and could use the resource.

During this process, the Hickman property, another neighboring land parcel, also came up for sale and was purchased by Josh Lieb. While the Township's remained committed to discussing the purchase of the Pontious land, the Township used due diligence to explore purchasing part of the Hickman property instead. After comparing the options, the Township decided that the Pontious property was indeed the best choice for safety issues and functional expansion of the park.

The opportunity to purchase adjacent land seems to be a once in a lifetime chance to provide the Township with an asset that will always hold its value.

Mr. Brown spoke about the current program at the ball diamond and how another diamond would allow the league to meet the current practice and game demands, to meet the needs of a Pony League and to host tournaments. Mr. Brown was enthusiastic about the volunteers that support the ball diamond and would over time help develop the second diamond.

All comments from those who attended were positive; no negative comments were expressed. Questions were asked about Blueberry Lane being a private lane. The Township would maintain the lane to the boundaries of the park. A concern about the drainage ditch north of the proposed project was expressed. The ditch is on the northern boundary of the project but the Township is committed to maintaining existing drainage systems. General comments were supportive of the project and purchasing the land was thought to make sense.

The proposed timeline is to conclude the sale in August or September although the land must first have a zoning change approved by the County.

The informational meeting concluded at 6:56 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Clerk Kevin Duff